

(d) Due to sugar cess imposed on sugar, the price of domestic sugar increases by that extent, which is presently Rs. 14 per quintal.

(e) Cane cost constitutes around 60% of the All-India Average Ex-factory Price of Levy Sugar for the season 1996-97. The taxes are (i) Central Excise duty on levy sugar, Rs. 38 per quintal, on levy-free sugar, Rs. 71 per quintal, and (ii) Sugar cess Rs. 14 per quintal.

(f) The Release Mechanism is regulated in a judicious manner in order to maintain the price of sugar in open market at a reasonable level to the consumer and also to ensure a reasonable return to the producers to enable them to pay remunerative cane price to the growers.

Public and Private Sector Investment in Agriculture Sector

3307. SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Public and Private Sectors investment in agriculture sector has been kept low during this year in comparison to the last year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of the States whose condition has become worse due to low investment in the agriculture sector;

(d) whether the Government have prepared any scheme to increase the investment in agriculture sector; and

• (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) and (b) As per the latest available information, the total investment or gross capital formation in agriculture sector at 1980-81 prices during 1994-95 and 1995-96 is as under:—

Gross Capital Formation in Agriculture (at 1980-81 prices)

(Rs. in crores)

Year	Public	Private	Total
1994-95	1329	4349	5678
1995-96	1310	4991	6301
%age change in 1995-96 over 1994-95	(-)1.4	(+)14.8	(+)11.0

The above table shows that the total as well as private investment in agriculture has increased. However, there has been a marginal decline in the public investment due to diversion of resources from investment to current expenditure.

(c) The State-wise details are not available. However, the gross capital formation in agriculture in the country has generally been showing a rising trend during the 90s.

(d) and (e) During 8th Plan Period (1992-97) significant level of investment has been made in favour of agriculture and allied activities like horticulture fisheries, rainfed farming, creation of infrastructure for minor irrigation and post harvest management for which specific schemes are being implemented. In order to further encourage investment for infrastructure in agriculture, a new Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) within National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has been established to provide credit for medium and minor irrigation and solid conservation projects. A provision has been made to increase share capital of NABARD from Rs. 500 crore in 1996-97 to Rs. 2000 crore in next five years. Under another new scheme of Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) initiated during 1996-97, a provision of Rs. 1300 crore (BE) has been kept during 1997-98 for providing assistance to States by way of loan for timely completion of selected large and multiple purpose irrigation projects.

[English]

Decline in Farm Lands Due to Excessive Use of Pesticides

3308. PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the farm lands are getting degraded due to the excessive use of pesticides;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that exported farm goods worth Rs. 1000 crores have been rejected by the Western countries due to the presence of pesticides;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the remedial measures being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Question does not arise.

(e) Notwithstanding the reply to the question, the Government is taking following preventive steps to ensure that farm produce do not have residues of pesticides beyond the permissible levels:—

- (i) Registration of pesticide is a mandatory requirement under the purview of Insecticides Act, 1968. The Registration Committee Constituted under the Act grants the registration for manufacture, import and use of pesticides. The Committee has laid down comprehensive technical guidelines stipulating data requirement *inter-alia* terminal pesticides residues on agricultural commodities/farm produce. The pesticides having terminal residues less than the prescribed limit at the time of harvest are only registered for use.
- (ii) As a part of mandatory requirement under the Act, approved label/leaflet by the Committee printed in Hindi, English and in one of the regional languages accompany each container of pesticides. The leaflet contain various vital information on use of pesticides *inter-alia* safety, interval between last spray and the harvest of agricultural produce to avoid any possible hazard to the consumer.
- (iii) The Government is promoting Integrated Pest Management which relies more on non-chemical method of pest control and use of biorational like botanicals, biocides etc. As a last resort safer chemical pesticides are recommended for judicious use to avoid terminal residues of such chemicals in agricultural commodities and environment. Consequently, consumption of chemical pesticides in the country has shown downward trend during last 3 years.

Mineral Water Project

3309. SHRI T. GOPAL KRISHNA :
SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS :
SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether mineral water market is growing at the rate of 40% and estimated current investment is Rs. 300 crore;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether National Dairy Development Board has launched its own brand of mineral water;

(d) if so, the details thereof and to what extent it is likely to help NDDB in its finances; and

(e) the steps taken for its competition in the market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) and (b) The sales turnover of the mineral water industry is estimated at Rs. 300 crores and the market is growing approximately at 40% per annum.

(c) to (e) : The NDDB has launched a mineral water project under the brand name "Jal Dhara" using the facilities at the Alwar Milk Union in Rajasthan. Jal Dhara is priced lower than the price fixed by its competitors. The project is expected to help the Alwar Union to generate additional income and help in its rehabilitation efforts.

[Translation]

Safai Karamcharies

3310. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV :
SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY :
SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY :
SHRI D.P. YADAV :

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Safai Karamcharis identified under the national scheme for emancipation and rehabilitation of safai karamcharis and their dependents, Statewise;

(b) the State provided with assistance under the said scheme and the States who have not been provided with assistance;

(c) whether the Government propose to implement the said scheme in Bihar also;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) The number of Safai Karamcharis identified so far, Statewise, as reported by the States/UTs under the National Scheme of Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers and their Dependents, are given in the Statement-I enclosed.

(b) The details are given in the Statement-II enclosed.